

Remarks:

Reconsideration of the application is respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 3, 5 and 9 - 13 are presently pending in the application. Claims 5, 12 and 13 have been amended. Claims 2, 4, 7 and 15 were previously canceled. Claims 6, 8 and 14 have been canceled, herein.

Applicant gratefully acknowledges that item 5 of the above-identified Office Action indicated that claims 1 and 3 were allowed, and that item 4 of the Office Action indicated that claims 8 - 13 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. In response to item 4 of the Office Action, Applicant has amended claim 5 to include all of the limitations of former claim 8, now canceled. Additionally, claims 12 and 13 were amended to include the limitations of former claim 5. As such, Applicant's claims 1, 3, 5, 12 and 13 are believed to be in condition for allowance, pursuant to items 4 and 5 of the Office Action.

However, Applicant notes that item 4 of the Office Action indicated that claims 9 - 11 "would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims." Applicant further notes that, **claims 9 - 11 depend, ultimately, from the allowed**

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claim 1, and not from any of the rejected claims. As such, because Applicant's claims 9 - 11 depend from an allowed independent claim, it is believed that Applicant's claims 9 - 11 are additionally already in condition for allowance. In light of the above, Applicant respectfully believes that rewriting of claims 9 - 11 is unnecessary at this time.

In item 3 of the Office Action, claims 5, 6 and 14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being obvious over U. S. Patent No. 6,594,273 to McGibney ("MCGIBNEY"). Claim 5 has been amended herein to include the subject matter of claim 8, which was indicated in the Office Action as being allowable. As such, Applicant's claim 5 is now believed to be in condition for allowance, pursuant to item 4 of the Office Action.

Applicant has canceled claims 6 and 14 from the instant application. Thus, it is believed that the rejection of claims 6 and 14 over MCGIBNEY has been mooted.

For the foregoing reasons, among others, Applicant's remaining claims are believed to be in condition for allowance, and such action is respectfully requested.

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More particularly, it is accordingly believed that none of the references, whether taken alone or in any combination, teach or suggest the features of claims 1, 5, 12 and 13. Claims 1, 5, 12 and 13 are, therefore, believed to be patentable over the art. The dependent claims are believed to be patentable as well because they all are ultimately dependent on claim 1.

In view of the foregoing, reconsideration and allowance of claims 1, 3, 5 and 9 - 13 are solicited.

In the event the Examiner should still find any of the claims to be unpatentable, counsel would appreciate receiving a telephone call so that, if possible, patentable language can be worked out. In the alternative, the entry of the amendment is requested, as it is believed to place the application in better condition for appeal, without requiring extension of the field of search.

If an extension of time for this paper is required, petition for extension is herewith made.

Please charge any fees that might be due with respect to Sections 1.16 and 1.17 to the Deposit Account of Lerner Greenberg Stemer LLP, No. 12-1099.

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Respectfully submitted,



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